



**TOWN OF GRAFTON**  
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER  
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD  
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519  
(508) 839-5335 ext. 1201 • FAX (508) 839-4602  
[www.grafton-ma.gov](http://www.grafton-ma.gov)

**SELECT BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 21, 2023  
7:00PM  
Conference Room A  
AND  
via Zoom**

2023 APR 20 AM 9:46

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK  
GRAFTON, MA

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Colleen Roy. In attendance were Chair Colleen Roy, Clerk Andy Jefferson, Ann Marie Foley, and Ray Mead. Vice Chair Mat Often was absent. Staff in attendance were Town Administrator Evan Brassard and Assistant Town Administrator William Blake.

**TRI-COM MEETING with Representative Muradian to Discuss Chapter 70 Funding**

Finance Committee members in attendance by roll call were Chair Mark Haddad, Vice Chair Greg Marr, Dan Cusher, Victoria Duckworth via Zoom, and Sue Robbins.

Superintendent James Cummings and Director of Finance Anita Patel were also in attendance.

Mr. Brassard presented the following information:

**PROJECTION VS. GOVERNOR'S BUDGET**

- Town of Grafton built a 3% (\$378,526) increase into Municipal Projections
  - Contained in 5-year projections
  - Belief that State would continue to fund Chapter 70 competitively
- Grafton Public Schools projected a 4.4% (\$518,899) increase in Chapter 70
  - Contained in 5-year projections
  - Belief that Chapter 70 funding would remain viable in high inflation economic landscape
- Governor's Budget projects a 0.7% (\$88,500) increase
  - This is a difference of \$430,399 - \$290,026

Representative David Muradian described the timeline for the budget process and spoke on his intention to help increase this amount of funding.

Dr. Cummings spoke on the increase in tuition for out-of-district students in FY24 that had not been forecasted.

Mr. Haddad described the funding formula's issues and the various amounts that schools will receive. He noted that some households in Grafton cannot afford a large tax increase.

Mr. Marr highlighted that the state aid formula is based on property values and income, but the municipality only collects property taxes. He stated that the only way to make the state contribution to public education equitable is to base it on the amount of income taxes that are paid to the state from each municipality.

Rep. Muradian agreed to relay these concerns and suggested holding another Tri-Committee meeting to try making some changes through MMA or DESE. Mr. Haddad stated that changes to the formula must come from the legislature. Rep. Muradian and Mr. Haddad discussed the logistics of the Student Opportunity Act.

Ms. Roy asked if Rep. Muradian had received a similar call to action from any of the other communities he represents. He responded that he has only met with individuals about this matter. Mr. Marr noted that MMA is calling for a \$100 minimum increase per student in Chapter 70 aid.

Mr. Cusher spoke on the potential for residents to be pushed out of Grafton if they cannot afford an override. He also noted that without an override, other residents may want to move to a town that spends more on education.

Rep. Muradian highlighted the issue of elders being priced out of their hometowns. He spoke on different ways to increase state aid, including revamping the Chapter 70 formula and utilizing sports wagering revenue. He invited members of the Select Board and Finance Committee to contact him if they would like to continue the conversation.

Ms. Robbins spoke on the need for the \$100 increase per student. She stated that they have a responsibility as a town to make sure students get what they need. Rep. Muradian agreed to support that increase and highlighted the need for mental health resources.

Ms. Robbins asked why the governor put so much funding into universities. Rep. Muradian stated that he would reach out when he has more information.

The Finance Committee adjourned at 7:35pm.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Roy read the following announcement: Please join the Select Board for lunch at the Grafton Senior Center on Wednesday, March 29 at 11:45am. Those who are interested may reach out to the Town Administrator's Office or Senior Center with any questions. The event flyer is included in tonight's meeting packet.

## **1. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a) Pole Petition by National Grid to install 6 JO Poles and remove 3 JO Poles at Old Westboro Road (continued from February 7, 2023)

Mr. Brassard stated that National Grid had withdrawn this pole petition.

Mr. Mead made a motion seconded by Mr. Jefferson to take no action and close the public hearing. Motion passed 4 – 0.

b) Pole Petition by National Grid to install 1 SO Pole at Old Westboro Road (continued from March 14, 2023)

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to continue the public hearing that was opened on March 14, 2023. Motion passed 4 – 0.

William Fontaine of National Grid spoke via Zoom about the need for the SO Pole.

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to close the public hearing. Motion passed 4 – 0.

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to approve and sign the pole petition by National Grid to install one SO Pole on Old Westboro Road. Motion passed 4 – 0.

**2. APPOINTMENTS/SELECT BOARD – None**

**3. APPOINTMENTS/FIRE CHIEF**

a) Auxiliary Firefighter at Station One – Tyler Prout

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Ms. Foley to affirm the appointment of Tyler Prout as an Auxiliary Firefighter of Station One. Motion passed 4 – 0.

**4. NEW BUSINESS/CONTINUED BUSINESS**

a) One Day Beer & Wine and One Day All Alcohol Licenses – Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University

Jessica Scott spoke on the school's three upcoming events.

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to approve a One Day Beer & Wine License for Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University for April 29, 2023. Motion passed 4 – 0.

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to approve a One Day All Alcohol License for Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University for May 6 and May 12 of 2023. Motion passed 4 – 0.

b) Continue Discussion of Local Initiative Program (LIP) Proposal Procedure Policy

Ms. Roy suggested nominating a Select Board member to attend the first ZBA meeting for each LIP. The Board agreed.

Mr. Brassard recommended sending notice to the Affordable Housing Trust as well as the ZBA when the Board approves a LIP. He suggested also sending a memo from his office highlighting details of the LIP Agreement.

Mr. Blake agreed to build these practices into the policy.

c) Schedule George Hill Road Outreach Meeting

The Board agreed to hold the George Hill Road Outreach Meeting on Tuesday, March 28 at 7:00pm in the Grafton Public Library with Mr. Brassard and DPW Director Paul Cournoyer.

d) Open the Spring Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to open the Spring Town Meeting Warrant. Motion passed 4 – 0.

## **5. SELECT BOARD REPORTS**

Mr. Mead spoke on the Economic Development Commission's meeting with GFI Partners regarding 124 Westboro Rd where they will build two 100,000 square foot buildings. He stated that he and Evan met with Claremont Companies about their project at 5 Millennium Drive. He announced that he will have something before the Board about the Grafton Townhouse in the next month.

Ms. Foley suggested that Mr. Mead ask about updating the EDC's webpage at their next meeting.

Mr. Jefferson appreciated the ZBA inviting the Board to their meeting with the Town's 40B attorney. Ms. Roy agreed that the meeting provided a lot of information.

## **6. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Mr. Brassard gave the following presentation:

### **BUDGET PROCESS**

- Finance Committee Hearings
  - 3/8/2023 – Update
  - 3/11/2023 – Update
  - 3/15/2023 – Update
- Cherry Sheet Released
  - Chapter 70 roughly 0.7%
  - U.G.G.A. roughly 2.7%
- BVT Assessment:
  - \$1,551,295.00
  - Roughly \$60K higher than anticipated
- Capacity
  - Currently \$186,106
  - Very conservative revenue figures

### **SAFE HARBOR/SEWER CAPACITY**

- Grafton no longer in Safe Harbor
  - Memo released to stakeholders
  - Opportunities to enter safe harbor exist
    - Will become harder in May
- Sewer Capacity
  - Memo released to stakeholders
  - Grafton still has room for growth

- Vigilance needed
- Should add requirement to LIP or ZBA process requiring sewer report and upgrade where necessary

Ms. Roy noted that an agenda had been posted for the Select Board to attend the ZBA meeting on Thursday, March 23.

Regarding Safe Harbor, Ms. Foley asked if Mr. Brassard's meeting with DHCD was scheduled in advance. Mr. Brassard stated that DHCD had asked for documents that the Town could not provide, so he requested a meeting to discuss the issue. He appreciated the amount of information he received during the meeting. Ms. Foley and Mr. Brassard discussed the potential for the Town to receive payment for the 8 Pine Street permit in 60 to 120 days.

## **7. CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Jefferson highlighted the invitation to make a proclamation for Children's Mental Health Week. Mr. Brassard recommended announcing it on social media as well. Mr. Jefferson suggested inviting the School Committee to participate.

## **8. RESIGNATIONS – None**

## **9. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None**

## **10. MEETING MINUTES**

- a) March 11, 2023
- b) March 14, 2023
- c) March 15, 2023

Mr. Jefferson made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead to approve the meeting minutes for March 11, March 14, and March 15 of 2023 as written. Motion passed 4 – 0.

## **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None**

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. Mead made a motion seconded by Mr. Jefferson to adjourn at 8:02pm. Motion passed 4 – 0.

The Select Board's meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Select-Board-4>

A full recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/sRxdvhcd5LI>